REMARKS

The office action of April 22, 2004, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over the patent to Muller et al.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over the patent to Osako et al.

Claims 1 and 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller et al.

Claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Osako et al.

Claims 1 and 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the patent to Bryson et al.

Finally, it is noted that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

It should be mentioned that the claims presently on file specifically define a device for collecting printed sheets in a certain sequence astride and atop one another to form a printed product. The device comprises a saddle-shaped support configured to be supplied by a sheet feeder with printed sheets, wherein the saddle-shaped support is arranged above a conveying device transporting the printed products to a further processing step. The saddle-shaped support comprises a circulating traction mechanism and driving members connected to the circulating traction mechanism. The driving members act on the printed products to convey the printed products in a direction parallel to a conveying direction of the conveying device.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions disclosed in the references.

Turning now to the references, and particularly to the patent to Muller et al, it can be seen that this reference discloses a conveyor plant for gathering and processing printed sheets, in which sheets are transferred from a collector chain 2 in a transfer region A to a double chain 3. The collector chain 2 has a

give-off end that overlaps a take-up end of the double chain 3. This means that the collector chain 2 and the double chain 3 are arranged behind one another, not above one another as in the presently claimed invention. Muller et al. do not disclose a saddle-shaped support configured to be supplied by a sheet feeder with printed sheets, wherein the saddle-shaped support is arranged above a conveying device transporting the printed products to a further processing step, as in the presently claimed invention. Muller et al. further do not disclose a saddle-shaped support that comprises a circulating traction mechanism and driving members connected to the circulating traction mechanism, as in the present invention. Furthermore, Muller et al. do not disclose the driving members acting on the printed products to convey the printed products in a direction parallel to a conveying direction of the conveying device, as in the present invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and the rejection of claims 1 and 3-4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the above-discussed reference are overcome and should be withdrawn.

The patent to Osako et al. discloses a book-binding method for a saddle-stitched bound book. This reference does not disclose or suggest a saddle-shaped support configured to be supplied by a sheet feeder with printed sheets in a certain sequence, wherein the saddle-shaped support is arranged above a conveying device transporting the printed products to a further processing step, as in the presently claimed invention. This reference also does not disclose or teach the features discussed above in connection with Muller et al., namely a saddle-shaped support that comprises a circulating traction mechanism and driving members connected to the circulating traction mechanism, and the driving members acting on the printed products to convey the printed products in a direction parallel to a conveying direction of the conveying device, as in the present invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and the rejection of claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the above-discussed reference are overcome and should be withdrawn.

The patent to Bryson et al. discloses a signature cover folder feeder. This reference does not disclose of suggest a

saddle-shaped support configured to be supplied by a sheet feeder with printed sheets in a certain sequence, wherein the saddle-shaped support is arranged above a conveying device transporting the printed products to a further processing step, as in the presently claimed invention. This reference also does not disclose or teach the features discussed above in connection with Muller et al.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1 and 3-4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on June 25, 2004.

By: _____ Date: June 25, 2004
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